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State Superintendent of Public Instruction

CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT
OF
EDUCATION

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March 17, 2003

Dear Advanced Placement Coordinators, High School Principals, GATE Coordinators, County Offices of Education, and Superintendents of Districts with High Schools:

ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP) TEST FEE REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM

This letter is to inform you that the California Department of Education (CDE) will again make funds available to pay eligible students' AP test fees. The purpose of the AP test fee reimbursement program is to remove the financial barriers that prevent many low-income students in comprehensive high schools from taking the AP end-of-course test. These funds, including federal, are made available through the State budget and the enabling legislation (AB 2216, Escutia, chapter 793 of the statutes of 1998).

This year, through an electronic process, the CDE will once again be accepting the application for the 2002-2003 school year (Form C). Last year's applicants were successful in submitting the required documentation online and we are pleased to say that the process was more efficient, which allowed for accountability and verifications of data with more accuracy. The updated online application will not be accessible until April 2003; however, the link to the application will remain at our Web site address <http://www.cde.ca.gov/pr/ap>. The pin number and password provided to district offices last year will remain the same. If you are unable to locate this information, please contact the Intersegmental Relations Office at (916) 323-6398. Also, keep in mind that these pin numbers and passwords are being issued to the district office for security and control purposes. Approval is required from the district office before information is released to others acting as agents from the school level.

Student Eligibility

Low-income students who are enrolled in an AP class and plan to take the end-of-course AP exam are eligible to participate in the AP Test Fee Payment Program. Upon teacher recommendation, a low-income student who has previously taken an AP class but not the exam, or who, in the teacher's estimation is academically ready to take an AP exam, may also be eligible to participate in the test fee payment program. To determine the family income level for student eligibility, the attached income table (Form A) titled "**Federal TRIO Program Annual Low Income Level**," provides specific household income eligibility information.

Ensuring Access by All Students to AP Programs

High schools are strongly encouraged to take affirmative steps to ensure access for students to AP classes and to promote parent and student awareness of their resources. In addition, legislation (SB 1689, Escutia, chapter 73 of the statutes of 2000) **requires** that all parents and guardians be notified by local education agencies of the availability of the funds for AP test fee payments. Senate Bill 1689 established the AP Challenge Grant Program under which a high school would design and implement a plan that would result in its pupils having access to at least four AP courses in core curriculum areas. During implementation of the AP Challenge initiative, the CDE is examining the issue of student access and support more closely with districts, schools, and other interested parties. We must all work together to ensure that **all students** have the opportunity to participate and be successful in rigorous academic courses including the AP Program. The awareness and availability of funds to pay for AP test fees is an important part of this effort.

Verification of Student Eligibility

Districts and schools must document the income eligibility of students participating in the program and maintain verification of need at the school site or at the district level for five years. A sample form, "Student Eligibility Form B" (to document and to verify student eligibility) is attached.

District Reimbursement

Districts or schools must pay the College Board for the full cost of the AP test fees as required. After the online submission of Form C (Advanced Placement Test Fee Payment Program 2002-03 School Reimbursement Form), the CDE will only provide reimbursement for the eligible students who have taken the exam; provided the district or acting agent has submitted the online application no later than the **August 15, 2003**, deadline. **A request for reimbursement after that date will not be approved.** After the submission deadline of **August 15, 2003**, districts should allow **approximately 12 weeks for processing and issuance of a check.** In the event that AP test fee payment requests exceed currently available funds; the CDE "shall prorate the grants based upon the ratio of the total amount requested to the total amount budgeted by the state for this purpose" (AB2216, Escutia, chapter 793 of the statutes of 1998, *Education Code* Section 52244 F).

Please note that these awards will be made contingent upon the availability of funds. You should be aware that the Legislature is currently considering numerous proposals, including those made by the Governor, in light of California's current budget crisis. Many of these proposals could potentially reduce and/or defer funds available for current year programs, including the funds available for this program and purpose. This is to advise you that if the Legislature takes action to reduce or defer the funding upon which this program is based, then this award will be amended accordingly. If funding

availability is not in question, the examination fee will be reimbursed as indicated in Table 1, column (D).

Table 1: Student Income Eligibility and District Reimbursement of AP Test Fees

Household Income (A)	Fee to be Paid by Student (B)	Exam Fee to be Paid to the College Board (C)	District/School Reimbursement (D)
1. Family income does not exceed 150% of the poverty income level.	Student pays \$5 per exam taken. Schools may charge students for tests ordered but not taken.	Student is also eligible for College Board Fee Reduction Program. District/school pays College Board \$50 for each exam, of which \$5 is collected from the student.	CDE will reimburse district \$45 for each exam taken (\$50-\$5 paid by student = \$45). CDE pays only for exams taken.
2. Family income exceeds 150%, but does not exceed 200% of the poverty income level.	Student pays \$5 per exam taken. Schools may charge students for tests ordered but not taken.	Student is not eligible for College Board Fee Reduction Program. District/school pays College Board \$72 for each exam, of which \$5 is collected from the student.	CDE will reimburse district \$67 for each exam taken (\$72-\$5 paid by student = \$67). CDE pays only for exams taken.
3. Family income exceeds 200% of the poverty income level, but student attends a school where 75% or more of the students enrolled are eligible for free or reduced meals. Schools should check with their districts to find out if they have 75% or more student eligibility for free or reduced meals.	Student pays \$5 per exam taken. Schools may charge students for tests ordered but not used.	Student is not eligible for College Board Fee Reduction Program. District/schools pays College Board \$72 for each exam, of which \$5 is collected from the student.	CDE will reimburse district \$67 for each exam taken (\$72-\$5 paid by student = \$67). CDE pays only for exams taken.

Where to Get More Information

If you have any questions about the AP Program, please contact Sallie L. Wilson at e-mail address swilson@cde.ca.gov, or telephone number (916) 323-5765. If you have questions about the AP Test Fee Program, please contact Eva Schrepel at e-mail address eschrepe@cde.ca.gov, or telephone number (916) 323-5146. This letter, attachments, and the application (when available) can be found at the

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CDE Web site address <http://www.cde.ca.gov/pr/ap>. Districts must submit the 2002-03 School Reimbursement Form C for each of their schools no later than **August 15, 2003**. After completion of the online process, an Assurances page will be printable and must be signed and returned by mail to:

California Department of Education
Intersegmental Relations Office
1430 N Street, Suite 2401
Sacramento, CA 95814

Attn: Advanced Placement Fee Reimbursement Program

Please ensure that all students and their parents and/or guardians are fully aware of, and are provided access to, these important resources.

Sincerely,

SUE STICKEL,
Deputy Superintendent, Curriculum and Instruction Branch

SS:es

Attachments:

Federal TRIO Programs 2002 Annual Low-Income Levels - Form A
Student Eligibility Form B

FORM A

Federal TRIO Programs

2002 Annual Low Income Levels

Effective February 2002 until further notice for the 48 Contiguous States, D.C., and outlying jurisdictions.

Size of Family Unit	150% Income Level	200% Income Level
1	\$13,290	\$17,720
2	\$17,910	\$23,880
3	\$22,530	\$30,040
4	\$27,150	\$36,200
5	\$31,770	\$42,360
6	\$36,390	\$48,520
7	\$41,010	\$54,680
8	\$45,630	\$60,840

For family units with more than eight members, add the following amount for each additional family member: \$3,080 for the 48 Contiguous States, the District of Columbia, and outlying jurisdictions.

The figures shown under family income represent amounts equal to 150 percent and 200 percent of the family income levels established by the Census Bureau for determining poverty status.

The poverty guidelines were published under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in the Federal Register, Vol. 67, No. 31, February 14, 2002, pages 6931-6933 and can be found at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Web site address:

<http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/02poverty.htm>.

Student Eligibility Form B
Documentation for the Advanced Placement Test Fee Payment Program

I. Student Information

Last Name	First Name	MI	Grade	Date
Name of High School				

II. Check the category by which the student qualifies for the AP Test Fee Payment Program (Students who are eligible for free and reduced meals have a household income that does not exceed 120% of the low-income level.):

1. Household income does not exceed 150% of the low-income level (income level after tax deductions). This category includes students who are eligible to participate in free or reduced meal programs.
2. Household income is greater than 150% but does not exceed 200% of the low-income level (income level after tax deductions).
3. Household income exceeds 200% of the low-income level, but student attends a school where 75% of students enrolled are eligible for free and reduced meals. (If this item is checked, no further verification is needed. You do not need to complete sections III or IV below.)

III. Family Verification of Need

I certify that my child is in need of financial assistance to pay for the AP exam fees and that our household income during the preceding year did not exceed _____ (indicate 150% or 200%) of the low-income level. I have submitted confirmation of need (please check one only) from _____ a government agency or _____ a photocopy of my most recently filed federal income tax return to the school.

Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian

Date

IV. Student Verification of Need

(For Students who are 18 years or older and not a dependent.)

I certify that I am in need of financial assistance to pay for the AP exam fees and my household income does not exceed _____ (indicate 150% or 200%) of the low-income level. I have submitted confirmation of need (please check one only) from _____ a government agency or _____ a photocopy of my most recently filed federal income tax return to the school.

Signature of Student

Date

* The district or school must maintain income eligibility documentation at the school site or district level for five years.